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. . . *(See page 5)*

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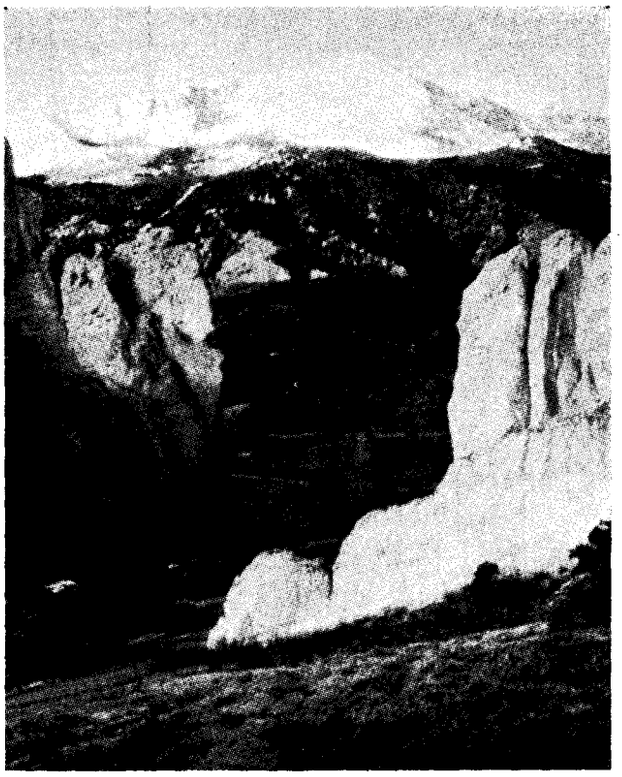
Writing in the Rockies

BY THOMAS HORNSBY FERRIL

ROCKY MOUNTAIN literature is devitalized by a low-grade mysticism dictated by landscape. Mysticism is a nebulous word. I use it simply as a blanket concept covering a wide field of emotional response to magnificent landscape. The imagination, transported by enormous mountains, deserts, and canyons, endeavors to answer landscape directly and tends to disregard, or curiously modify, what might otherwise be normal considerations of human experience.

Indeed Oscar Wilde may have been talking sense when he said that our West could never produce literature because, as in Switzerland, the mountains were too high. He visited the Rockies in 1882. Lloyd Lewis and Henry Justin Smith in "Oscar Wilde Discovers America" quote Wilde:

> There are subjects for the artist, but it is universally true that the only scenery which inspires utterance is that which man feels himself master of. The mountains . . . are so gigantic that they are not favorable to art or poetry. There are good poets in England and none in Switzerland.



PIKE'S PEAK THROUGH THE GATEWAY TO THE GARDEN OF THE GODS (*Courtesy Union Pacific.*)

It comes as a shock to an imaginative person to realize for the first time that landscape as such has no particular meaning and he may reject for years—costly years in the life of an artist—the human experience which gives it meaning.

But in our region poets, novelists, and —though they would be the last to have an inkling of it—writers of pulp adventure fiction are at heart rudimentary metaphysicians trying to fit some system of thought or action to the demands of pictorial nature. It is an inverted Romantic movement because no conscious philosophy accompanies it. Tom Mix in the Wild West movies is really a hangover of Rousseau.

The case for landscape mysticism is clearer in poetry than in prose. Yet I believe that the same emotional influence which, in the presence of vast mountains, causes the poet to say: "This is all so big, only God could have caused it" is responsible for the notion of prose writers: "This is all so big, only super-men can cope with it." The ancestor conveniently becomes a tribal god and here, I think, in the hero convention of prose, we have a clue to the specious perpetuation of the pioneer legend as a contemporary presence.

Underlying all our imaginative writing is a religious impulse, nature worship in its simplest terms. Perhaps the Rockies are the last stronghold of animism in process, the recognition of something divine in the inanimate forms of nature. Our folk-ways are full of incipient nature myths and hero myths which have been arrested by the shift of our credulity to the myths of economics.

Let me illustrate how this religious impulse, or mysticism excited by landscape, thwarts the poet and causes him to waste time. Since the clinical evidence is clearer in poetry, I prefer to emphasize that aspect before indicating a direction for studying the problem in prose.

First: most people, beholding Nature in large and unfamiliar scale, think about what caused it and answer: God! Critically, we may have ignored a profound platitude and all that it implies, the designation of the West as *God's Country.* Discovery of God in scenery tapers off as the arroyos flatten into the Corn Belt, but in the high country the naming of a group of rocks "The Garden of the Gods" is not fortuitous; it answers a primitive impulse.

God-finding is widely distributed, in prose, poetry, postcards, advertisements. Willa Cather refers to "the Genius of the Divide, the Great Free Spirit that breathes across it." The Billings Advertising Company quotes Chief Plenty Coups: "The mountains are still as God made them," and the Colorado Association assures us that Colorado is "a land where the Creator has stamped his Eternal Monogram." Harriet Monroe, late editor of *Poetry,* told us from the rim of the Grand Canyon: "In these warm and glowing purple spaces disembodied spirits must range and soar, souls purged and purified and infinitely daring." William Winter, dramatic critic, at the Grand Canyon could only quote Coleridge on "The Invisible." "Out in Arizona where God is all the time," writes the Hon. David Kincheloe of Kentucky in the *Congressional Record.*

I might endlessly elaborate supporting data on the pandemic prevalence of God-finding and causation ideas, also simple mountain worship such as we find in the poem which Helen Hunt Jackson, author of "Ramona," wrote in the presence of Cheyenne Mountain overlooking Colorado Springs: "Beloved Mountain, I Thy Worshipper . . ." As a rule, these poems attempt to give a verbal facsimile of the appearance of a mountain by piling up too many desperate adjectives, with hints of fear and wonder coupled with the God idea, stated as an abstraction. Stripped of

Next Week

WRITER IN HOLLYWOOD
By PHIL STONG

PRESENT INDICATIVE
By NOEL COWARD
Reviewed by James Thurber

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applied decoration, the organic verbs and nouns say very little. The content of literally hundreds of Rocky Mountain poems is represented by Walt Whitman's "Spirit That Form'd This Scene," written in Platte Canyon, Colorado. I agree with Irene Pettit McKeehan of the University of Colorado that this poem sums up "the underlying idea" of Colorado literature, but I am disappointed in her belief that it expresses "its hope, its intention," because the Whitman who wrote this verse was moving away from the function of poetry:

Spirit that form'd this scene,
These tumbled rock-piles grim and red,
These reckless heaven-ambitious peaks,
These gorges, turbulent-clear streams, this naked freshness,
These formless wild arrays, for reasons of their own,
I know thee, savage spirit—we have communed together . . .

Compare Whitman's Colorado lines with a similar idea in a God-finding poem by Coleridge under the spell of Mont Blanc, "Hymn Before Sunrise in The Vale of Chamouni:"

O dread and silent Mount! I gazed upon thee
Till thou, still present to my bodily sense,
Did'st vanish from my thought: entranced in prayer,
I worshipped The Invisible alone.

Observe that Whitman is talking about an abstract spirit. Coleridge's "The Invisible" is an abstraction. Harriet Monroe gave us abstractions in the "disembodied spirits" hovering over the Grand Canyon. Willa Cather's "Genius of the Divide" is an abstraction. Unfortunately, anything which drives a poet to abstractions, drives him away from poetry. Poetry is concrete. Poetry is a passionate apprehension of experience based on the magical statement of how things sound, smell, taste, look, and feel. Poetry can work from concrete specification to abstract implication, but never, without leaning on some external context for a crutch, can it work from the abstract back to the concrete. Preponderantly is this true of religious poetry. The bewildering richness of Revelation or Genesis, or Blake, Dante, Hopkins, or Milton, leaps like flame from the concrete image.

So it appears that the mountains demand religious utterance yet deny the poet plausible symbols for implementing such ideas concretely. He may exhibit some skill in remanipulating established symbols, but somehow our mores are out of step with the revelations of Pisgah. It bores us to be asked to supply a context for these abstractions; they exert too futile a draft on our recessive faith. True, we still thirst for concrete specification in our gods, but reject it as absurd unless taken vicariously and, I think, snobbishly through what we regard as some simpler culture, Negro culture being the handiest. It answered something deep in our hearts to see God smoking a cigar in "The Green Pastures."

The Indians were the last to write successful religious poetry in this region. Had Coleridge or Whitman lived long ago in Walpi, their God need not have been "The Invisible." On the mountain top they could have described the Sun-God Ahul wearing turkey feathers, corn husks, a reddish fox skin, leggings netted with bean sprouts, and tinkling anklets terraced into rain. In this direction lies poetry.

But if mountain mysticism leads to the dilemmas of abstraction, let it not be inferred that specification is not attempted. Yet I feel that Colorado's poet laureate, Nellie Burget Miller, is using a doubtful method when she tries to make us see Galahad and Percival in mountain clouds, and Maude Freeman Osborne has not quite convinced me of the immortality of Mount Evans which has sisters and blesses lambs. In this field of specification of the supernatural, my favorite is T. O. Bigney who observed in 1875 that:

The thorax and the pelvic space
Of the grand old Rocky Range,
Are the vasty, ever beauteous parks,
Features fair and strange,
Peculiar to this giant chain
Which holds the continent's vast brain.

You can paste that in your memory book along with Byron's "Mont Blanc is the Monarch of Mountains."

But landscape such as ours cannot be ignored. It is an integral part of our emotional experience. A mountain range is forever a blue wall behind which something is happening. Being an emotional person, it is difficult for me to turn from those glorious ranges and say to myself: more water, better tilth, more straw needed for bedding, earlier decomposition of manure, higher yields of grain, alfalfa, sugar beets, yet this is the road to poetry: men in action, the transitoriness of life, memory, desire, agony, ecstasy.

If landscape cannot be used directly as subject matter, its beauty can be employed vividly in symbols of instrumentation. Pictorially, mountain snows are meaningless, but meaningful if the poet feels the mountain waters moving up through the grasses and the beasts into the metabolism of men with power to dream beyond the wasting of the glaciers and the granite. It is safer for the poet to be impressed by the erosion of the mountains than their enduring qualities, or any attitude which gives him the whip hand. It was good to hear Robert Frost say at George Cranmer's ranch that the mountains were pitched just right for his convenience: he could read the ferns like a book. Early in February Carl Sandburg was working in Denver on a nostalgic rough-and-tumble poem about "the God-damned Wasatch mountains" which left no doubt as to who was boss. And in lieu of the pathetic fallacy—a familiar pitfall where landscape is compelling—a disciplined poet can take the direction of empathy, projecting his own imagination into external nature as a springboard for human implication, but always keeping control.

Referring briefly to fiction, the same forces of mountain mysticism are at work. In abandoning the play for the setting, the fiction writer feels under pressure to fit his characters to the vast panorama his eyes behold. He becomes oblivious of the complexities of natural experience and naively rationalizes history to select the most active behavior appropriate to the scene. This results in a simplification of life into rather pure and tight patterns, rigidly conventionalized. He contrives heroes and heroines capable of meeting an apparent nature on its most elemental terms. I say apparent nature because actual Western experience in conflict with actual nature is as complex as elsewhere. Our economic and moral adjustment to the physical facts of climate, water, soil, mineral resources, etc., is infinitely involved and does not lend itself to the simplification the apparent landscape suggests.

It is not drawing too long a bow to regard the galloping heroes of popular fiction as vestigial tribal gods. They have emerged through about the same process which once produced centaurs and titans.

(*Continued on page 13*)

And No Bell Rings

By JOSEPHINE W. JOHNSON

. . . AND no bell rings
Some day when all the little bills are paid,
And all the letters answered, and the door
Chained and bolted, and the chair
Propped under the handle, and no bell
Rings.—
In that day we will rise and walk to the window,
We will rise and kneel by the window
And observe the mountains where the eagles nest.

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A World He Never Made

ANGELS IN UNDRESS. By Mark Benney. New York: Random House. 1937. $2.50.

Reviewed by GEORGE DANGERFIELD

MARK BENNEY wrote this more than brilliant autobiography after doing a three years' stretch for burglary in the prison at Wormwood Scrubs in England. He is under thirty, he got his education chiefly at reformatories, and he writes the sort of English which for nearly a century has been wedded to public schools, universities, refinement. As a criminal who can write beautifully, he occupies a lonely and embarrassing position, even though the native critics have welcomed him effusively: the more effusive the welcome, the more he resembles a gate-crasher at an expensive and discriminating party.

True, he wears his clothes better than many of the legitimate guests. "A heaven-born writer," says Miss Rebecca West; "entirely fascinating," says Mr. Verschoyle: but these superlatives have an air of uneasiness; and when Mr. Agate cries "guttersnipe," you experience a genuine relief.

Mark Benney himself is under no illusions. "Mine . . . is a paltry, predatory life," he says without self-pity and in excellent prose. But the strangeness of this book, and it is very strange, almost the strangest book of the century, lies in its ability to make us feel that we do not belong in it. It gives us a sense of invisibility, of walking untouched and untouchable in a world of aliens, who, if they could see us, would thrust us out, having first relieved us of our money and trinkets. Who is leading the better life, we or they? Mark Benney does not raise this question, at least only at the very beginning and the very end, when he seems to lean a little towards our side. Perhaps he has reformed, perhaps he has a moral: but we do not want him on our side, not because we do not like him, but because we suddenly realize that we have so little to offer.

Mark Benney is the son of a Jewish bookmaker and a cockney prostitute. He was born out of wedlock. His mother was devoted to him, but she was highly impulsive ("I can see her in every mood but those of hesitation or serenity"), and the maternal impulse had to take its chance with the rest. His earliest childhood was spent with a series of foster-mothers, until at last he was moved into his mother's flat, and became a foster-nephew to whatever "Uncle" happened to be there. Uncle Stanley was fat, prosperous, and kind; but Mother grew bored with him, introduced a gang of horsy companions, and Uncle Stanley moved out. Uncle Fred was more the thing. There were terrible scenes, chiefly alcoholic: Mother was jealous, Uncle Fred used his fists; but they composed their quarrels easily, even lived respectably for a time, and were much in love.

In these circumstances, with these examples, Mark Benney came to know more and more of the underworld of Soho. The tragic little boy who, roused from his sleep by sounds of revelry in the next room (Mother's horsy friends at the bottle), went in trembling and began the only song he knew—"Where the bee sucks there suck I"—became, inevitably, a little thief. He learned to be "wide," an untranslatable word. Remand School, Industrial School, Borstal—all institutions for reforming the young criminal—kept him for increasing intervals out of Soho, but he went back with an increased appetite for low life and burglary.

His descriptions of crime, prison, and the contemporary London underworld cannot be summarized. They are more than just brilliant, though they are that too. They create a world as dubious and vital and unused to remorse or reason as the world of the Elizabethan coney-catcher or of Moll Flanders. The character sketches are superbly done because none of the judgments of our world of police and property are brought to bear on them. And the finest of them all is the portrait of Mother—of Mother who fades, by exquisitely perceived degrees, from a bright and joyful image into an apathetic little woman, gentle and terrible, trying to pin some grimy osprey feathers to a new cheap toque.

In the end, of course, you find yourself offering Mark Benney all the laurels with which the English critics were so generous. "Witty," "subtle," "psychologically profound," "a sudden revelation," "will be the envy of novelists"—the book is all that. "Heaven-born" alone does not exactly suit a writer who has just re-created the sinks of Soho. It reminds us, somehow, that Mr. Benney is, after all, a gate-crasher. There is no absolute indication that he has reformed. He may never settle down to the pretentious world in which his book is such a brilliant and moving stranger. Mr. Benney writes far better than most of us, but let us console ourselves. We have our respectability.

When the editors decided last week to put Mark Benney's picture on the cover there was no photograph of him in this country. Random House enterprisingly cabled the English publisher of "Angels in Undress" for a radiophoto, which was in our hands two days later.

The Chosen People

MY FATHER'S HOUSE. By Pierrepont B. Noyes. New York: Farrar & Rinehart. 1937. $3.50.

Reviewed by BERNARD DEVOTO

OF the experimental societies founded in the 1830's and 1840's, the most intelligent and high-minded was the Oneida Community. Writing the history of the Oneida experiments, John Humphrey Noyes, the founder of Oneida, declared that they commonly failed because they based their economy on agriculture rather than industry, because they did not extend their communism to the family, and because they substituted a philosophical "ideology" for a religious one. The most revolutionary and by far the most intelligent of the experimenters, he based Oneida solidly on the industrial revolution, gave religious controls to its energies through "Perfectionism" and mystical inspiration, and substituted for the family a relationship called "complex marriage" and a form of eugenics called "stirpiculture." All of these necessitated social and psychological readjustments of the greatest interest, and though public curiosity

AN ONEIDA COMMUNITY GROUP. *From "My Father's House."*

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has naturally centered on the sexual innovations, the others are fully as important.

Mr. Pierrepont Noyes, whose distinguished career formidably supports his father's theories, is a "stirpicult," a son of the founder and of a woman carefully selected to be his mother on eugenical grounds. She bore another child to his father and, in the complex marriage system, one to another member of the Community. Mr. Noyes was born toward the end of the Community's phase of pure communism, and his autobiography, which ends with his sixteenth year, is concerned primarily with the sentiments accompanying the modifications that were imposed by the pressure of the outside world and the changing ideas of the new generation.

It is fascinating as autobiography, but it is important as a record of emotions and ideas produced by a social experiment. I commend it to anyone who has any interest in history, sociology, or psychology, but have no space to discuss its data. It makes clear that John H. Noyes should have added to his conditioners of failure the limitations of personal leadership, the inability of rational planning to anticipate the irrational sentiments of later generations, and the tendency of violently altered institutions to resume their original form. Some of the most poignant emotions that Mr. Noyes deals with are associated with the aggregation of authority and privilege in a society that had communized both, and with the instinctive production of distorted forms of the private family in a society that had annihilated the family. Such modifications of familiar energies and the new forms of feeling and thinking produced by communal life are the themes of his most absorbing chapters. He says little about the sexual as distinguished from the social aspects of the Oneida experiment, but makes one observation of the greatest significance: that the adolescent reawakening of sex was somewhat deferred. This flatly contradicts what psychology has assumed, but, together with some evidence to the contrary, there is supporting evidence in Mormonism.

"My Father's House" is an extraordinarily interesting book, absorbing as reminiscence and permanently important as a social document. But we need at least two more books from the Oneida Community. There are obvious reasons why the greatly desired report on sexual adaptations and their results may never be written, but the sentiments that prevent that need not prohibit a study of the social regulations and especially the economic conduct of the Community. In detail, how was the Community operated as a social enterprise, and in detail, how were the industries managed? Such a book would be enormously valuable. Clearly, Mr. Pierrepont Noyes is most fitted to write it, and clearly if he wrote it he would be performing a public service.

A Grand Voyage for Good Sailors

AWAY FROM IT ALL: AN ESCAPOLOGIST'S NOTEBOOK. By Cedric Belfrage. New York: Simon & Schuster. 1937. $3.

Reviewed by HASSOLDT DAVIS

THIS sprightly travelogue, already boosted by the Literary Guild and Negley Farson, should have a large and various audience. There is something for everyone here, love, danger, politics, humor, a dozen astonishing lands, a quantity of ocean, and Mr. Belfrage, Escapologist. If you can weather his relentless "escape" coinages and follow him unabashed by scatological metaphor, he is the very man to lead you intelligently, and always entertainingly, across the world.

Exhausted by cities, Mr. Belfrage left England in quest of "peace to think about

CEDRIC BELFRAGE IN CAIRO

only one thing at a time." He tramped through Spain and around Majorca, then went to Palestine where the Jews, he found, when they thought about Hitler at all, were grateful to him for accenting the distinct identity of their race, though the Zionist elders were suspicious of those who immigrated out of fear and not loyalty to the ideal. The insecurity of the world at large was further emphasized by the presence on the Dead Sea of an English company which was quietly extracting the £120,000,000,000 (*sic*) worth of chemicals there, chemicals essential to the manufacture of high explosives.

Jaunting through Baghdad by bus, down the Persian Gulf by freighter, and across India by train he reached Ceylon to conclude that the white man's burden was one of wealth piratically gained. Singapore bored him. The "Breast Boom" in Bali saddened him. Australia with its accent, its unemployed, and its rabid arrogance seemed no haven for an escapologist. New Zealand was better, but primarily because it was the jumping-off place for one of the most lunatic and hilarious sea voyages this reviewer has ever seen in print.

On a twenty-two-ton steam tug that had been transformed into a sailing vessel, Mr. Belfrage, Mrs. Scott the owner, her platonic lover, and a sulphite old captain sailed 1,700 miles through the South Pacific, making their only stop at the Kermadec Islands. None but the captain could even steer a boat. Mrs. Scott and her protégé were sick and quarrelsome. The boat leaked, the engine rusted, the food was nauseous and the weather violent, all to the accompaniment of as fine a running commentary by the captain as Rabelais could have dreamed after a diet of cantharides. Life has outdone literature in the creation of this ancient mariner, with his encyclopedic smut, his genial cruelty, his appetites, and his manually-operated iron teeth which served the least of them.

It is a grand voyage for those with steady stomachs, and Mr. Belfrage has described it vividly, emblazoning it, like all his adventures, with a sure humor that is rarely unkind and invariably apt. But he gladly left his mad companions to travel through Fiji and on to Tahiti "where men have killed the things they loved." Here again there was no escape for him, and his book peters out with his enthusiasm as he wanders through America to England, to home and escape from escape at last.

Life by Moonlight

THE MOONS RIDE OVER. By Carl Zuckmayer. New York: Viking Press. 1937. $2.50.

IN the Bozen region, on the borderland between the Gothic North and the Italian Lakes, lies the "Rocca dei Striës," a mist-encircled and magnificently romantic setting for the moonstruck tale recounted by Herr Zuckmayer in this well written and attractive first novel.

The author, a young Austrian writer, shows considerable skill in blending unusual elements into a thoroughly satisfying story. The case of the mysteriously sadistic heroine, Magdalena, and her brother Firmin, contributes just enough excitement to offset nicely the hearty sentiment found in the narrator's love affair with the charming servant girl Menega. And the long summer evenings at the castle provide much good talk. These witty and pregnant discussions of politics, human nature, and the arts are not dragged in to lend substance to a weak plot, but arise naturally from the incidents of the tragic drama in progress at Striës. Zuckmayer avoids the strained and artificial atmosphere of "intellectual" fiction, yet gives us sound psychology always. The author's tolerance, smooth style, and flair for telling detail make of this a book likely to have a quiet vogue in this country.

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Rivera's Mexico and Max Miller's

PORTRAIT OF MEXICO. By Diego Rivera and Bertram D. Wolfe. New York: Covici-Friede. 1937. $4.75.

MEXICO AROUND ME. By Max Miller. New York: Reynal & Hitchcock. 1937. $2.50.

Reviewed by LYNN CARRICK

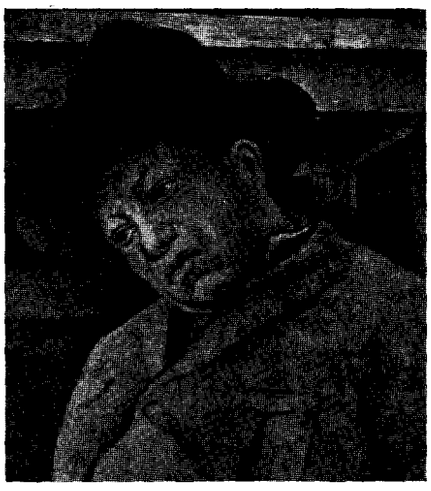
BOTH Diego Rivera and Max Miller are individualists, though much of the former's recent work, as everyone knows, is devoted to propaganda of a non-individualistic sort. And, Mexico, being a land of contrasts and contradictions, offers the individualist the widest possible scope for self-expression, whether written or visual. Both men unite in an ardent admiration for Zapata, whom most people on this side of the Rio Grande have persisted in regarding as little more than a bandit chieftain of the Villa type. Mr. Miller learned differently from an Indian colonel whom he met on his recent trip and who had fought side by side with the Agrarian leader from the beginning until his assassination by treachery. To Rivera, Zapata is a symbol of Mexico's long struggle upward from bondage. In the Cuernavaca murals he appears beside his white steed like a sad-eyed Indian version of the Knight of the Holy Grail, and elsewhere his sombrero has a strangly halo-like effect.

Max Miller does not like tourist Mexico, as he makes quite plain in "Mexico Around Me." The book starts with his train trip through the hot and backward southern State of Chiapas—which he found hot and backward. He liked the women of Tehuantepec whom others as well as he have called the most beautiful in Mexico. In fact, he likes Mexico and Mexicans—with certain reservations—but wants it clearly understood that this conclusion is his by right of discovery and not because of the Mexican vogue which is upon us.

The so-called floating gardens of Xochimilco Mr. Miller thinks are just vegetable gardens in a swamp. He doesn't believe they ever floated. For that matter, he is skeptical about there ever having been lakes of any considerable proportions in the Valley of Mexico. He thinks Cortez and Bernal Diaz drew the long bow for obvious purposes of their own. Cortez, he maintains (with aid of a forgotten book published in 1856), must have had a rather easy time of it subduing primitive tribes by virtue of superior weapons, much as the Italians did recently in Ethiopia. If the Aztec empire was such a powerful affair, why, he argues, does so little remain as evidence of the great cities and centers of culture proudly boasted of by the victorious Spaniards? Mr. Miller thinks that the Indians of our own West were a hardier lot than any Cortez met. He also contends that the Conquistadores greatly exaggerated the numbers of their opponents—as no doubt they did, like all soldiers before or since.

But one is still not convinced. The Spaniards by their own accounts were a destructive crew, and even so plenty of museums bear testimony to the culture of the Indians in Mexico. Our own northern Indians were formidable against soldiery only when they possessed firearms—and the Aztecs obviously possessed none. Yet, encompassed by treachery and superstition and the desertion of their allies, they threw the Spaniards out of Tenochtitlán and gave them a sorry time. No, whatever one may think of Cortez and his followers, the burning of the ships and the march on the unknown Indian empire on the high plateau must remain a heroic episode.

"Mexico Around Me" is a readable book, though somewhat self-conscious.



RIVERA—A SELF-PORTRAIT

One could wish that Mr. Miller left the reader with clearer impressions, but the author reiterates that he has no sympathy with the usual guide book. And his Mexico is never dull certainly.

"Portrait of Mexico" is another sort of book entirely. First of all, there are two hundred and forty-nine full-page half-tone reproductions of Diego Rivera's work in Mexico, including his celebrated frescoes and murals. The selection is the artist's own, and it is a satisfying one. Of course, color plays such a vital part in Rivera's paintings that no illustrations in black and white can produce anything like the effect of the originals. Still, nothing else would have been commercially possible for the publisher.

The text by Bertram W. Wolfe is a rapid survey of Mexican history from earliest times to the present, and it seems strange that no attempt was made to connect the narrative with the Rivera paintings beyond footnote references to certain plates. The book thus lacks unity; yet despite this fault, this is a book which all admirers of Rivera will want to have.

The Salem Witches

GALLOWS HILL. By Frances Winwar. New York: Henry Holt & Company. 1937. $2.50.

Reviewed by WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

I ENJOYED very much Frances Winwar's vivid account of the Pre-Raphaelites in her "Poor Splendid Wings" and her treatment of Keats, Shelley, and Byron in "The Romantic Rebels." Now she has been at the archives of Salem, Massachusetts, and her new historical novel of old New England contains real historical characters and authenticated incidents, through which is woven the love story of beautiful Mary Bishop and Sterry Lane who sailed on the *Sarah's Adventure.* It is a most readable tale which delves into the truth of the mad obsession that sowed terror and legalized murder through New England in the early days—deeper than the recent talking-picture, "A Maid of Salem," which uses some of the same material to concoct a different story.

The grimly obsessed Cotton Mather, of course, looms up here as the portentous figure he proved at the time. Indeed, he was right in maintaining that the Devil was loose in the colony—but it was so in quite another fashion than he found it. All human hatred, envy, untruthfulness, cowardice, hypocrisy, and stifled passion contributed to further the sensational deaths of poor blameless old women and induce a reign of terror where, by the frothing spasms of an hysterical child, the most unlikely persons might be accused and condemned. The evidence—or rather the lack of true evidence—was monstrous. Mather was steeped in his reading of witchcraft practices abroad, to his mind a second gospel. "All men believed these things." Miss Winwar makes good use of the Matherian lore and of the unholy fantasies that hid the truth from him. At the same time she shows us clearly the utter unreason of this mental and psychological epidemic. We can observe our own fanaticisms abroad in the world today—so, harshly as we may judge those times, we need not be too proud.

When the author digresses from fact and builds her romance out of her own imagination she betrays for the first time what can only be called a certain juvenility of mind. In our childhood days we have read just such romances—aside from a few details—as that of the blemishless Mary and the sea-going Sterry. Miss Winwar has written a very story-book romance, of course with a happy ending, save for the striking description of the tragic end of Mary's tavern-keeping mother. But for all that, owing to her faculty for enthusiasm in research and re-creation of a period, the story held my attention to the end. It is in many respects a living picture, and some of the detail is fascinating.

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The Saturday Review
of Literature

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NOBLE A. CATHCART.....Publisher
AMY LOVEMAN.....Associate Editor
GEORGE STEVENS....Managing Editor
HENRY SEIDEL CANBY, WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT, CHRISTOPHER MORLEY } Contributing Editors

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Amateur History

WHEN the editor has once declared a book bad he has no desire to repeat the declaration or to seem malicious in superfluously driving his point home. But since Mr. Hacker reopens the case of W. E. Woodward's "A New American History," in the letter printed on the opposite page, our position must be reaffirmed. For the book is having a wide sale (sixty thousand copies so far, according to the ads) and when many people may have their ideas about the American past influenced by a book which *The Saturday Review* regards as meretricious, the magazine is obliged to repeat its judgment. Mr. Hacker's defence is ingenuous to the point of obscurantism.

If Mr. Woodward's book were presented to the world as a dabbler's impressionistic excursion into restricted aspects of American history, which is what it is, *The Saturday Review* would accept the label and hold its peace. But it is written, marketed, and defended by Mr. Hacker as a comprehensive and reliable history of the United States—and it is far from that. The editor would be willing to discuss a number of its deficiencies that have so far been ignored here, but must confine himself to the criticisms already made, that it is antiquated and inadequate, ignoring practically all the results of the most fruitful generation in the study of American history, and that it is untrustworthy because it is habitually inaccurate in such fields as it does treat. Mr. Hacker's letter does not disturb that judgment, and most of it is quite irrelevant to the principal issue. That issue is quite simple: Is Mr. Woodward's history a good one?

Mr. Hacker says that Mr. Woodward is writing history for men and women of this generation. So Mr. Woodward says, but he leaves out practically the whole content of American history except war, politics, and diplomacy. Our review said that the book is a generation behind historical knowledge, and Mr. Hacker tacitly admits the criticism but pleads that it is a pious undertaking to bring uninformed readers of forty and over up to where history stood a quarter of a century ago. But the point of our criticism is that in that quarter-century American history came of age, and that it is absurd to ignore its mature findings. Mr. Woodward's failure to present them results in a thoroughgoing misrepresentation. In general what is left out of his book is: economic development, economic institutions, economic structure and mechanisms, social institutions, social movements, social development and experimentation, art, science, literature, education, religion, reform, the differentiation of American life and thought, and all internal history that does not get into the *Congressional Record*. What is left out is what makes American history.

Mr. Hacker slides easily past the criticism of inaccuracy, saying that Mr. Woodward's errors are not important and that none of them is fatal. That depends on how you feel about accuracy and whether you believe that a process repeatedly in error is a satisfactory way of getting at truth. What is a fatal error? Mr. Hacker says that Mr. Woodward's object is to destroy myths. By creating new ones? An intention to present "the realities of the American past" is commendable but not enough in itself. The whole burden of our criticism is that he does not get at the realities, that the sum of his errors is so great as to vitiate his findings. Accuracy is the first and the constant necessity of history. Misstatements, misconceptions, and omissions are not a satisfactory basis for interpretations. If purity of heart made a historian we should all be scholars.

Mr. Schlesinger, confining himself to Mr. Woodward's treatment of the national period, listed four principal classes of errors: misstatements of fact, garbling of quotations, muddleheadness of interpretation, and paralyzing omissions. Mr. Allan Nevins and Mr. Henry Steele Commager, reviewing the book elsewhere, pointed out equally serious errors in Mr. Woodward's treatment of the colonial period. Mr. Hacker avoids examining the sum of them but it is staggering. It is so great that, as *The Saturday Review* originally said, Mr. Woodward's conclusions have no validity and the public interest requires them to be labelled spurious. It does not matter how interesting, eloquent, warmhearted, or Jacobin interpretations may be if the descriptive basis which they interpret is false.

A history which undertakes to interpret the American past must, as a prelude to everything else, be trustworthy, accurate, and comprehensive. That popular history can be all of that is abundantly shown by such books as the Beards' "Rise of American Civilization" and J. T. Adams's "Epic of America." Does Mr. Hacker care to assert that Mr. Woodward's book is of comparable quality?

All the rest of Mr. Hacker's letter begs the question. There is no consistent "philosophy" in Mr. Woodward's book; there is a fairly constant irritability and a resolute determination to be iconoclastic twenty-five years late, but nothing more. The references to Jefferson, Lincoln, and Bryan are good oratory but irrelevant. Mr. Hacker is unimpeachable when he says that every historian must constantly struggle against his biases, prejudices, and prepossessions: probably the best way to struggle is to get the facts clear and complete before you start interpreting them. He is, however, flatly wrong when he argues that a historian's findings cannot go very far beyond such prejudices and prepossessions. Great areas of American history are established beyond any question; all that this magazine asks of Mr. Woodward is to find out what they are.

A qualified historian is one who can exhaustively investigate the questions he is interested in, weigh the evidence, and present his results. This is no occasion to debate "answers" or the value of professional training. But when Mr. Hacker names Adams, Bancroft, Fiske, Motley, Parkman, and Rhodes as "amateur" historians who were not professionally trained, he is deliberately suppressing the fact that there was no professional training in American history in their time. Most of the "thirty-eight dead historians" listed in "The Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences" lacked professional training because they could not get it, not because professional training is bad for a historian. Incidentally, the article on Beveridge in that encyclopedia dismisses his work as a historian with three lines, the one on Fiske emphasizes his career as a philosopher, and the one on White treats him primarily as an educator and a diplomat. Furthermore, G. L. Beer was a professionally trained scholar, as Mr. Hacker will find if he consults the record. Let us be accurate, let us not distort the emphases, and let us present all the relevant facts.

The Saturday Review realizes that ideas derived from history are extremely important. It believes that popular education in the American past is a great need, that there cannot be too much of it, that the more widespread a realistic knowledge of American history becomes the better for all of us. That is precisely why it undertakes to examine the qualifications of those who would teach the people. It originally decided that Mr. Woodward's book was not a reliable guide, and it must repeat that judgment. The person who got his knowledge of American history from it would be gravely misinformed. The reasons for our decision have been stated three times and will not be repeated again. The letters page is open to anyone who cares to follow Mr. Hacker in dissent.

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Letters to the Editor: *Louis Hacker Replies to Arthur M. Schlesinger*

"A New American History"

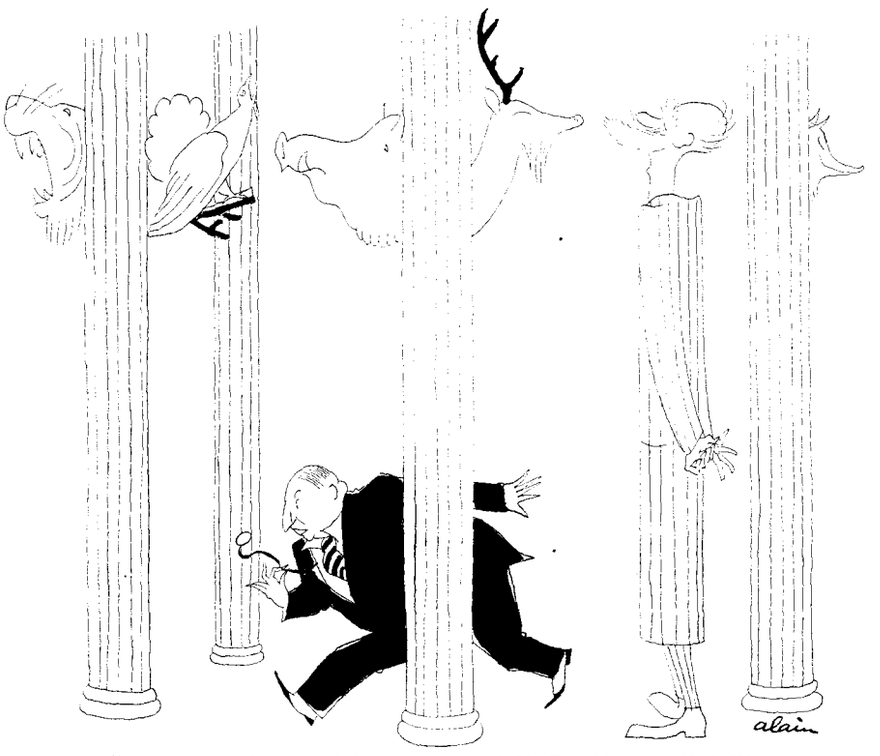
SIR:—The recent comments appearing in *The Saturday Review of Literature* concerning Mr. Woodward's "A New American History" merit a reply because they raise certain fundamental questions about the historical craft. Both Professor Schlesinger, in his review of Mr. Woodward's book, and Mr. DeVoto, in his editorial article, make the same particular charge: that the book, instead of being a "new" history is in reality so old in content and presentation as to be of the vintage of twenty-five or thirty years ago.

Mr. Woodward's critics, having been bred in the academic environment and familiar with the most recent text writers, assume that the whole literate reading public of America is acquainted with the latest discoveries of the historical seminaries. This is not so. A frank analysis of most of the history texts used in our schools today will reveal that the purpose of the writing and teaching of history still continues to be largely the perpetuation of a national myth: in effect, that ours is the greatest nation in the world; that our national leaders have always been cast in an heroic mold; that idealistic motives have always inspired events; that class conflicts and the revolutionary outbreaks of European peoples have never stained our pages. Within the life of the present generation, bolder text writers, it is true, have sought to water down this tradition somewhat.

But what of the generations that went out from our high schools and colleges in the years preceding the World War, who are today adult Americans forty years of age and older? Scarcely any of them are familiar with the new researches of American scholarship. In their minds, the great American myth flourishes just as actively as it did when it first was planted there twenty or twenty-five years ago. It is to this middle generation of Americans that Mr. Woodward has addressed himself, to the adult and thoughtful Americans who, like himself, were made the victims of a priggish and insufferably romantic legend.

Mr. Woodward's book is informally written, humanly presented, the mature work of a writer who believes that men and women have been and continue to be interesting, complex, and likable. He has expressed bluntly his distaste for heroic military statues and stuffed shirts, for cant and deception, bombast and sharp dealing; he has written pungently about them—(not exclusively, for his pages are filled with fine and glowing tributes to many personalities and events in American history)—because these defects have spotted the pages of American history.

It is particularly unfortunate that Professor Schlesinger was unable to catch the underlying philosophy that pervades Mr. Woodward's book because Professor Schlesinger himself so thoroughly sympathizes with it. Mr. Woodward is what we might today denominate a Jacobin; he belongs in that company of levelers, humanitarians, and egalitarians which includes men like Roger Williams, Thomas Jefferson, Andrew Jackson, Abraham Lincoln, W. J. Bryan, Louis D. Brandeis, both Robert La Follettes, and Charles A. Beard. Indeed, it is the finest strain in our American tradition. Passionately devoted to democracy, with an abundant confidence in the common man, distrustful of privilege, and ever ready to do battle against monopoly and fraud, the members of this school of thought have had an abiding affection for the realities of the American past and a real hope that these could be continued. Again and again the pages of Mr. Woodward's book show that this was his own intention.



"GOOD HEAVENS, GWENDOLYN, WHERE *IS* MR. SHAW?"

Mr. Woodward has been accused of being inaccurate. Undoubtedly he has committed minor errors. It is amusing to recall to Professor Schlesinger that his own reviews of the separate volumes of the "Dictionary of American Biography"—written and edited under the most careful and scholarly auspices—consisted largely of long lists of errors of omission and commission. As a writer in the field of history myself, I am prepared to say that for the most part Mr. Woodward's particular errors are not important and that none of them is fatal.

Mr. DeVoto places his objections to Mr. Woodward's book on more general grounds, to wit: that Mr. Woodward has no business writing an historical work because he is not a professional historian. And so, the argument runs, he has fallen into a number of traps, the most important being that he has been looking for unity and significance in history. In short, Mr. Woodward wants answers. And Mr. DeVoto says dogmatically: "The answers that history gives must always be incomplete and tentative, conceding much to God and more to the irrecoverable formulas of chance." This general argument is the basis of Mr. DeVoto's objections both to Mr. Woodward's book and to Mr. Clifton Fadiman's laudatory review of it in *The New Yorker.*

Mr. DeVoto has not clarified the distinction between historians and historical scholars. An historian first and foremost must be a philosopher; an historical scholar is primarily a professional craftsman working according to accepted rules. The historical scholar searches for new light on particular situations, tests its validity, and, if he has established its accuracy, seeks to substitute it for old-established beliefs. Sometimes the two roles of historian and historical scholar are happily blended, but increasingly today, in America, a wide chasm yawns between the two groups. History, in the hands of such craftsmen, is cabined, cribbed, and confined. It has no movement or flow. And it never seeks to relate past events to present perplexities.

The historian belongs to a bolder calling. With increasing rarity is he a professional scholar. Most frequently he is a philosopher, lay or technical, who embarks on the human adventure of seeking to penetrate the past in order to understand the bases of human and social conduct. The historian is always insistent in his search for those very answers that Mr. DeVoto dismisses. What answers he finds are presented largely in terms of his own prejudices, prepossessions, training, class loyalties, and experiences; to say that they are inade-

(*Continued on page* 19)

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Overtones of Spain

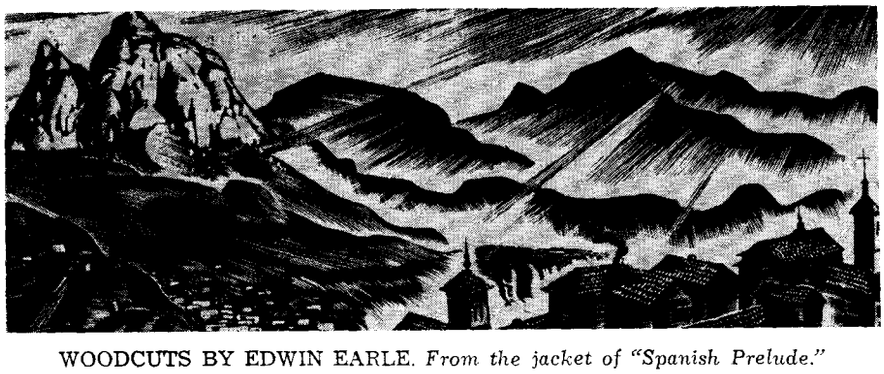
SPANISH PRELUDE. By Jenny Ballou. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1937. $2.50.

Reviewed by LIBBY BENEDICT

A BOOK placed in a contemporary scene and derived from personal experiences depends on overtones as much as on direct writing. A great deal must be left within the writer and can only be suggested.

In "Spanish Prelude," a Houghton Mifflin Fellowship winner, the direct writing is excellent and the effect certainly what the author intended. Classification is difficult, but not in itself an impediment. The book is patently not straight autobiographical narration, neither is it fiction; perhaps it can best be called an abstraction of personal experiences. One guesses that the narrator is imaginary, and that some of the characters are compilations and some simple transpositions from life to writing. But all this uncertainty in no way provides a snag. The only snag there is comes from a cramping stylization in the first chapter and a stretch of self-conscious writing at the end. In the bulk of the book Spain emerges unhampered. Whether they are transcriptions from life or composites, the characters are of the earth, of the land. It is the Spain of Alfonso's last days, but the weird intransigeance the world has come to know in the last eight months is manifest and today's occurrences are made more understandable. From the boarding-house keeper's husband who refused to live with his wife after she had reduced weight, because he claimed she was not the woman he had married and he would be committing adultery, to the recondite Teresa, the vanguardist (and unintelligible) writer, there is a quality about the people which is indubitably Spanish.

But the overtones are perhaps not what the author intended. For most of the people she deals with are not only Spanish, they are something else besides. The book is pivoted by the people who sit around the cafés and the Women's Club—journalists, writers, talkers. They live in that rarefied atmosphere where theories are more important than life. Miss Ballou has discriminatingly kept from their talk the phraseology that has grown popular more recently, but the ideologies are there. They cry for extremes and for action, and they do it as hypochondriacs. They cry themselves into prison and sometimes before a firing squad, which is tragic enough. But more tragic is the fact that ultimately they do not go alone. Miss Ballou herself speaks scoffingly of the "courteous revolution" for which Ortega y Gasset was pleading in those days. But one wonders whether in a plebiscite even the illiterates among the population would not have spurned the misery of the past year for that "courteous revolution," slow as their salvation would have been under it. The new battle over the Logos may really be rooted in their existences, but they themselves still hold existence more dear. All of them—the wrinkled peasants prodding their oxen on the hills behind Algeciras, the "lost-nineteenth century" aristocrats in the villas, the ironworkers of Seville, the laborers of Madrid—have shown that they can chose a creed and die for it if they must. The question is, *must* they?



WOODCUTS BY EDWIN EARLE. *From the jacket of "Spanish Prelude."*

Sense About Fascism

THE FASCIST: HIS STATE OF MIND. By E. B. Ashton. New York: William Morrow & Co. 1937. $2.50.

Reviewed by GEORGE C. HOMANS

MR. ASHTON'S description of the present regimes in Germany and Italy is not a great book but deserves the greatest praise. He makes the mistake of assuming that there is a thing that corresponds to the word "fascism," and then setting out to discover what it is, instead of stating certain observable facts, and only then giving a name to them. All experience shows that, except for the purposes of popular journalism, the latter is the better method. If Mr. Ashton had followed it, he would not have been scared off by the fact that there are two words "fascism" and "communism," and that strong but indefinite sentiments are aroused by each, and would have studied the third of the great dictatorships, Russia, in comparison with Germany and Italy. I am persuaded that to consider them together is more illuminating than to consider them in two groups. It has become increasingly plain, especially since the announcement of Goering's Four-Year Plan, that the chief points of contrast between the fascist totalitarian states and the communist are that the two had different origins and that the communist ideology is more sanctimonious than the fascist and more widely accepted in the world at large.

Mr. Ashton bases his description of the characteristics of Mussolini's and Hitler's regimes too much on the theories the fascists and the Nazis have developed to account for what they have done. He may admit that the fascists, at least, were opportunists, but he does not write as if he understood that leaders of men of the order of Mussolini, Hitler, and Stalin are moved not by theories but by their thirst for power and their sense of what must and can be done. When such men have acted, they may then formulate policies and say that they acted only to realize them.

In spite of these shortcomings, Mr. Ashton's book deserves the highest praise, if only because, unlike almost all other books about modern Germany and Italy, it gives at least the surface impression of being written without partiality. Better still, it does not give off the characteristic odor of sanctity of most modern works on politics, to whose authors has been revealed once and for all the knowledge of good and evil in a world bewildering to their fellows. Mr. Ashton is at his best, and excellent, when he bases the present phenomena in Germany and Italy solidly on the past political history of those countries. But there is much more to be learned before we shall have even the most meagre understanding. No one has given a convincing picture of the cumulative effect of rapid industrialization, the

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defeat in the World War, the Republic, and the depression, all on top of an ancient German inferiority feeling—the effect of all these not on the German economic order alone but on the whole social order. After such calamities, we are fools to be surprised if a prophet comes down from the hills to call the folk back from what he calls the sins of the fathers to what he calls the old German virtues, and they follow him. It is absurd, but prophets are that way. Mr. Ashton is especially penetrating when he says of Hitler's program for labor, that he works "to enhance labor's importance in the social scheme, and to minimize the economic importance of the rewards of labor." Unfortunately neither Hitler nor anyone else is more than beginning to know what he means by the social scheme.

Gloom in Norway

ALLI'S SON. By Magnhild Haalke. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1937. $2.50.

Reviewed by AGNES ROTHERY

THIS is the story of a boy and his mother who live on one of those small and barren islands an hour —by rowboat—from the mainland of Norway. When the book opens the boy, Elling, is a pitiful, abnormal child of five. When it closes he is a murderous maniac of twelve. It is possible—and the author suggests it—that treated with wise understanding Elling might have become a poet. Instead, he is driven, step by step, or perhaps one should say blow by blow, into stark and malevolent lunacy. The reader is spared no step of this harrowing exposition. The turning of each page is the turning of the screw. Although the printed story ends as Elling is being led away in a straitjacket, it has so powerfully projected itself that we are left in no doubt that the forces of ignorance and evil continue and that calamity piled on calamity does not exhaust but merely intensifies the capacity for suffering.

"Alli's Son," the first novel of a Norwegian, Mrs. Magnhild Haalke, has none of the defects of a first novel. The psychology of the characters, the desolate Northern scene, the suspense, the inexorable march of events are presented firmly, sparsely, compellingly, and this admirable style is admirably translated by Arthur Chater. There can be no question as to Mrs. Haalke's ability to compose and present a superior novel. There is always the question as to whether psychopathic degeneration is proper material for a work of fiction.

Readers who are not revolted by cruelty will find "Alli's Son" superb. Critics who judge a novel purely from a technical standpoint will have nothing but praise for the book. But the average reader should be warned. There is no catharsis in this tale to redeem its tragedy.

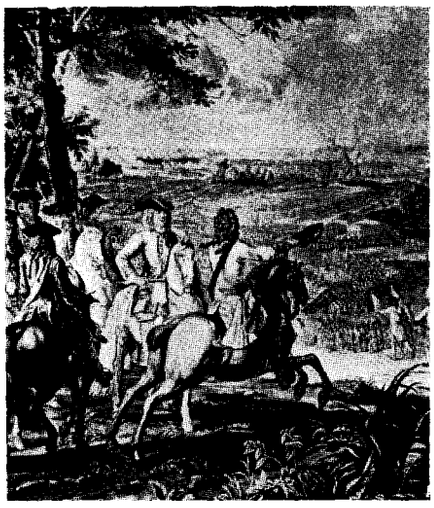
A Career at Its Prime

THE YEARS OF MASTERY. Marlborough, His Life and Times. By Winston Churchill. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1937. *Vol. V.* $4.50.

Reviewed by ARTHUR LYON CROSS

WITH the majesty of an epic Mr. Winston Churchill, in this stately volume, continues the life of his illustrious ancestor through the momentous years 1705 to 1708 inclusive. As heretofore, his wide knowledge of the sources and literature of the period, his intimate acquaintance with military affairs, and his long experience in politics and administration enable him to grasp all the essentials of the vast and complicated story and to relate it in a style that is a marvel of clarity and charm.

It was a period in which the petty, or even sordid, and the heroic were strangely mixed. In England, torn by personal intrigue and venomous partisan strife, the



THE BATTLE OF OUDENARDE
Detail from a tapestry.

union with Scotland was brought about, party government was continuing to take shape, and a definite stage in the development of cabinet government was reached. But insistent and gruelling as the problems were at home, Marlborough had to face them with Job-like patience while he valiantly met his mighty responsibilities on the Continent. Not only did he have to contend in many theatres of war against the formidable fighting machine with which Louis XIV had so long dominated Europe but he had, by the most delicate diplomacy reënforced by threats, to hold together more than a score of greedy and discordant allies. While it is a bit of a strain to hear Aristides continually called the just, Mr. Churchill does convince us of Marlborough's combination of daring and caution, his resourcefulness and his ability to foresee the moves which his opponents were likely to make. When they acted otherwise they usually made mistakes of which he was prompt to take advantage. The only fault which his biographer will admit is the Duke's niggardliness in his own personal expenses. This he made up for in the generous care of those who served under him.

Those who were closest to Marlborough in his campaigns Mr. Churchill characterizes with discernment and justice. He pays renewed tributes to the genius of Prince Eugene and the beautiful relationship which existed between him and Marlborough. The unfortunate mistake in the case of General Webb is set in its true light. Indeed, in the few controversial questions which are raised in this volume, Mr. Churchill is able to sustain his case. The accounts of the main features of the war, the battles of Ramillies and Oudenarde, the disasters in Spain, the failure at Toulon, the siege of Lille, and the ingenious methods of conveying supplies are magnificent specimens of writing and, aided by an abundance of admirable plans, make the most complicated maneuvers crystal clear.

Widely as he has read, Mr. Churchill has quoted extensively from Coxe's painstaking collection of letters in his "Memoirs of the Duke of Marlborough." Several hitherto unpublished bits from the Blenheim manuscripts are also quoted. The ample bibliography, the adequate index, the ilustrations, and the fine maps are further commendable features that add to the value and enjoyment of the work.

Arthur Lyon Cross is professor of history at the University of Michigan and author of "A History of England and Greater Britain."

Greek Tragedy, English Comedy

AUGUST FOLLY. By Angela Thirkell. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1937. $2.

THE production of a Greek tragedy in a country village engenders the very British comedy of Mrs. Thirkell's new book. The author revels in the absurdities of household life in the Tebben family, seriously involved in this catastrophe. She also treats with sympathy and patience an infectious case of calf-love which somewhat interferes with the attainment of that Sense of Doom so necessary if Euripides is to make the proper impression on a modern audience. These are her strong points. Elsewhere the story is content to echo more familiar writers of the lighter than air school. Mrs. Palmer, the organizing genius back of this midsummer effort, is obviously a close relation of Mr. Benson's Queen Lucia, and the plot at times recalls one of Saki's best tales on a similar subject. If the humor of these feuds and sentimental reconciliations is not particularly subtle, Mrs. Thirkell's Worsted is always a pleasant place. Readers on American beaches next summer should enjoy it in contrast to our own holiday manners,—besides which, the Tebbens are often really funny.

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The Bowling Green by Christopher Morley

The Folder

Honorable Age

UNGIRDLED and a little warm with wine
The Mandarin beneath his famoused Tree
Of Paradise would his soft flesh recline
In the deep shade where drones one golden bee,
Until across the valley from among
Plebeian groves
Staggers like smoke a half-heard song
Of early loves:
Then sudden, winter-struck, his grot
Echoes with emptiness, philosophy forgot.

It lasts an eye-wink only while his sleeve
Dries in its roses the appropriate tear,
Then with a deftness you would scarce believe
He plies a brush experienced and clear
To paint the poem of that sunny breast,
Those tiny feet,
Moon-face, cloud-hair, and all the rest
That made youth sweet.
He's clever, yet do you count wise
Who makes but verses of such memories?

HUGH WESTERN.

A Grotto

The Bibliodisiacs, a sodality of young booksellers in Chicago, meet in the cellar of a bookstore on Madison Street for crackers and cheese and poetry reading. As a matter of fact (so Jackson Selsor, keeper of their minutes, explained to me) it is a whiskey-and-sodality; the literary association of the names on the *Cutty Sark* label has caused them to adopt that brand as official emollient.

Their favorite reading seems to be of the 18th century, and they have recorded that they think Dr. Johnson's description of Pope's grotto (in the *Lives of the Poets*) one of the most delightful passages in literature—

"He adorned it with fossile bodies, and dignified it with the title of a grotto; a place of silence and retreat, from which he endeavoured to persuade his friends and himself that cares and passions could be excluded.

"A grotto is not often the wish or pleasure of an Englishman, who has more frequent need to solicit than exclude the sun; but Pope's excavation was requisite as an entrance to his garden. . . .Vanity produced a grotto where necessity enforced a passage."

The Bibliodisiacs have named their cellarage The Grotto in memory of A. P.

Their enthusiasm started me rereading the *Lives of the Poets* (which is easiest obtainable in the World's Classics series). In Dr. Johnson's biography of Milton I found a faintly hodiernal echo. He was speaking of Milton's brother Christopher, who became a Judge—but "retired before any disreputable compliances became necessary."

The Manchester *Guardian*, in its sly way, is one of the world's most unobtrusively humorous papers. Instance its current series of characterizations of famous London clubs, an assortment of terse spoofs or anecdotes probably collected by Mr. James Bone, a living Bartlett. Here are two examples:—

THE CALEDONIAN CLUB

He flung himself into a taxi-cab. "Drive me to the Caledonian Club," he said.

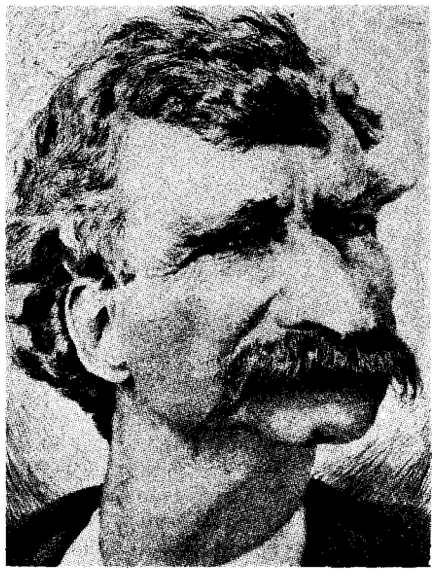
The taxi-man's face fell.

EAST INDIA UNITED SERVICE CLUB

"Kipling, no. Must have been after my time."

George Ade on Mark Twain

George Hiram Brownell of Chicago has reprinted in a pamphlet three magazine



MARK TWAIN
Reproduced in "Revived Remarks on Mark Twain," from a drawing in Life *(1898) by an unknown artist.*

tributes to Mark Twain written by George Ade when Twain died in 1910 and foremost a sparkling piece (*American Review of Reviews*, June 1910) of "Mark Twain and the Old-Time Subscription Book." Mr. Ade admits that he had completely forgotten writing it, but on rereading it he finds nothing to alter. He says:—

"Time, Geologists tell us, levels all things. But Time, the same authorities report, has reduced Mark Twain's stature by less than .0000001 of an inch since his death. At this rate of loss per year, he will be going strong when those, now doubting the permanence of his fame, will have long since been levelled to a position approximately 6.000000 feet below the earth's surface."

Beyond the Missouri

I wonder if the Burlington Railroad (of which we were speaking recently) knows that one of the most charming things ever written about it is Willa Cather's poem *Going Home*. It begins with a line I often think of—

How smoothly the trains run beyond the Missouri—

and can be found in the 1933 edition of *April Twilights* (Knopf.)

"Popeye's Injunction"

I suppose *Editor and Publisher* had its tongue in its cheek, or up its sleeve, or wherever it would be most useful, when it printed (Feb. 13) William Randolph Hearst's Journalistic Creed. It appears that Mr. Hearst wrote it for "the celebration in Atlanta of the *Atlanta Georgian's* silver anniversary as a Hearst paper."

One of Mr. Hearst's sons is on the staff, and to him Mr. Hearst directed his profession of faith. I quote briefly in honor of the Duke of La Rochefoucauld:—

"Well, son, a healthy, husky paper coming of age can be of help, around the house and home in which it lives, in many ways, but the most important are these:

"It must give reliable information.

"It must give wholesome entertainment.

"And it must give useful service.

"A decent paper goes into good American homes as a guide, philosopher and friend.

"Good people have confidence in it, and it must be worthy of that confidence.

"It must be careful to relate nothing but what it believes to be the truth; and it must bear the responsibility of making sure that the news it collects from every quarter of the globe and delivers to its readers is as accurate and trustworthy as human agencies can make it.

"Young people like to laugh, and many a useful lesson can be inculcated in a sugar-coated dose of humor.

"Popeye's injunction to 'eat your spinach' has aided the dietitian and boosted the vegetable market."

Et cetera.—But why, I hear you asking, bring in La Rochefoucauld? It was he who said, Hypocrisy is the homage that vice renders to virtue.

A correspondent (Kalamazoo) writes that she has a great hankering for Vincent Starrett's *Private Life of Sherlock Holmes* (Macmillan, 1933). She can't afford to buy it but is willing to make an exchange. She sends a surprising list of some favorites of her own, any one of

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which she says she would trade in for the Holmes book.—I myself think she's too generous, but here's her list and I can forward correspondence:—

1. *The Innkeeper of Abbeville* (2-act melodrama by Edward Ball), printed for John Lowndes, London, 1826. Frontispiece, colored. I. R. Cruikshank.
2. *Letters to Various Persons.* Henry D. Thoreau. Ticknor & Fields, 1865.
3. *Charles Dickens,* 6 vol. Globe edition, illus. Darley & Gilbert, 1867.
4. *The Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets.* Samuel Johnson, L.L.D., N. Y. Wm. Dwell, 1811. 3 vol.
5. *The Golden Legend,* by H. W. Longfellow. Ticknor & Fields, 1851.
6. *Works of Capt. Marryatt* (complete one vol.). Leavitt & Allen, N. Y. 1859.
7. *Memoirs of Count Grammont,* by Anthony Hamilton (notes by Sir Walter Scott). McKay Pub. Co. 1894.
8. *Observations Upon the Prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse of St. John.* By Sir Isaac Newton, London. Darby & Browne. MDCCXXXIII.
9. *The Works of Sir Joshua Reynolds.* 3 vol. Edmond Malone, Esq. London. 1809.
10. *Aftermath.* By Henry W. Longfellow. Osgood & Co., Boston. 1873.

Cobbett on Long Island

Jesse Merritt of Farmingdale, L. I., arch-archivist of Nassau County, reminds me that when the Oyster Bay train takes me through New Hyde Park (L. I., and not to be confused with F. D. R.'s Hyde Park) we pass the neighborhood where William Cobbett lived 1817-1820 and where he wrote his American Journal.

Jesse clips from the *Nassau Daily Review* a quote from Marjorie Bowen's *Peter Porcupine,* a biography of Cobbett (Longmans, Green). Cobbett's impressions of Long Island's ragged edges are still to some extent true: I wonder what he would think of that vast dump of abandoned automobiles near New Hyde Park today. He wrote:—

> The dwellings and gardens and little outhouses of labourers, which form so striking a feature of beauty in England, and especially in Kent, Surrey, Sussex and Hampshire, and which constitute a sort of fairyland, when compared with those of the labourers of France, are what I, for my part, most feel the want of seeing upon Long Island. Instead of the neat and warm little cottage, the yard, cow-stable, pig-sty, hen-house, all in miniature, and the garden, nicely laid out, and the paths bordered with flowers, while the cottage door is crowned with a garland of roses or honeysuckle; instead of these we here see the labourer content with a shell of boards, while all around him is as barren as the sea beach; though the natural earth would send melons, and the finest in the world, creeping round his door, and though there is no English shrub nor flower which will not grow and flourish here. This want of attention in such cases is hereditary from the first settlers.

The Test of Time

The Schoolteachers' Novel

SILAS MARNER: THE WEAVER OF RAVELOE. By George Eliot. 1861.

GEORGE ELIOT'S worst novel is her most important. An official document of the United States government testifies that "Silas Marner" is beyond a doubt the one book most frequently read by American high school children. In any large number of years to come it will have more readers than either "Anthony Adverse" or "Gone with the Wind" or both of them. One part melodrama and one part Sunday School moralizing, wound together with a style bare of charm or discipline or any real eloquence, here is our schoolteachers' idea of the best-seller of the ages.

Why? Any working teacher can tell you. "Silas" utters no dirty words. No character—like Hetty Sorrel, for example, in "Adam Bede," a better novel—gets pregnant. Nothing in all its pages could shock the Epworth League or the Chamber of Commerce or the W. C. T. U. or the Legion or anyone else—excepting, of course, a lover of good literature. . . . You have a son. You want him to form what the pedagogues, for lack of a classier phrase, have to call the reading habit. Then you'd introduce him to good books, like "Huckleberry Finn," or the "Odyssey" or a hundred others you could name. You wouldn't make him read this unacceptable scenario for a second-rate Shirley Temple movie—this "Silas Marner"—after assuring him that here, certainly, is a great book. Unless you wanted to turn him away forever from "great books" to detective stories and Kathleen Norris, you wouldn't do that.

The schoolteachers do. In a monograph (No. 20, "Instruction in English"), published by the Department of the Interior, Office of Education, as a part of the National Survey of Secondary Education, Dora V. Smith recites the tragic fact. Of "the thirty classics in most frequent use in junior, senior, and four-year high schools . . . 'Silas Marner' ranks first": a classic being any book a lot of people read. If you remember that the only purpose is to interest (in professional circles read "motivate") children in reading, you may see other peculiarities in Dr. Smith's statistical cross-section. Excluding three anthologies, not one of the thirty titles belongs on this side of 1900; only seven are American; five are Shakespearean dramas.

And "Silas Marner" leads them all. That is the importance of this book today. It is a symbol of a good many of our failures—of our failure, for example, to prevent the teaching of public school English from becoming an almost exclusively female occupation. Of our failure to repeal the ordinances which in a thousand cities and towns compel these females to be old maids forever. Of our failure to insist that administrators spend more time in finding out what their teachers are teaching, and less time on those triple demons—publicity, politics, and promotion. Of our failure, finally, to elect anyone but politicians and insurance men to our school committees. These are the evils which must be eradicated. Let all good men and true, all who would redeem the faith our ancestors so bounteously placed in free schools, rally to the cause. Let "Silas Marner" be their battle cry.

J. H.

Writing in the Rockies

(*Continued from page* 4)

but their development has been arrested at a rudimentary plane. They are supernatural in the sense that they tend toward caricature only dimly related to human life. They are clearly creatures of landscape commingled with ancestor worship, the apotheosis of the glorified pioneer. Moreover, they possess another god-attribute, timelessness; they are immune to anachronism.

Note some of the foregoing points in the ritual of the pulp paper magazines. *Thrilling Ranch Stories* wants material in which "the background of the Old West is used—no radios, automobiles, etc.,—but make the characters *modern* in spirit." Observe that satisfying landscape gives the illusion of reality: "Colorful terrain and a clear working knowledge of the vegetation and countryside bring a quality of reality," advises the editor of *Thrilling Western,* but as for life itself "we prefer the flavor of the Old West with the impression that the happenings are of today. If the setting is in the West today [again the setting dictates the play] it must be idealized. The people must be modern in spirit with boundless courage and endless endurance. Western dialect must be used and the slang of today should not be allowed to creep in." Being naive, the pulp formula may be more significant than other evidence bearing on our literary folkways.

One further observation on fiction of different quality: the case of Hamlin Garland. He wrote well on the prairie, badly in the mountains, and well on the prairie again. Possibly he illustrates my earlier point: that the inspiration of scenery works at cross-purposes with the inspiration which produces literature. If anyone ever repudiated extravagant pioneer romance, it was the Garland who wrote "Main-Travelled Roads" in 1891. This was followed by other works conceived with such savage integrity that even Howells, who admired him, felt obliged to apologize for such unconventional realism. Then Garland came to the high-

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lands and wrote a basketful of Rocky Mountain novels in which he capitulated completely to the conventions of scenery. But back on the prairie in 1917 he gave us "A Son of the Middle Border" with the old integrity.

Carl and Mark Van Doren attribute Garland's mountain lapse to "errors of enthusiasm." This is correct. Perhaps "errors of enthusiasm" covers the field I designate "landscape mysticism." But regardless of what we call it, it is equivalent to a physical force which destroys the uncontrolled artist and delays orientation of the controlled artist. Garland, a man of considerable control, was drugged by the same lotos Whitman had tasted when Whitman wrote this nonsense:

> Talk as you like, a typical Rocky Mountain Canyon, or limitless sea-like stretch of the great Kansas or Colorado plains, under favoring circumstances, tallies, perhaps expresses, certainly awakes, those grandest and subtlest emotions of the human soul, that all marble temples and sculptures from Phideas to Thorwaldsen—all paintings, poems, reminiscences or even music—probably never can.

It isn't true, and to believe it causes the artist to waste time and effort, winding himself into cocoons of futile metaphysics. Art, as we have come to know it, does not exist in external nature, nor can external nature, powerful as it is, move us as we are moved by Shakespeare or Brahms. Landscape was irrelevant to Greek and Elizabethan dramatists. "Scenery is fine," wrote Keats, "but human nature is finer—the sward is richer for the tread of a . . . nervous English foot."

Having indicated the difficulties of poets and one novelist whose case I believe to be representative, I might close by suggesting that our most competent writing, with richest overtones, has always come from reporters: scribes with Coronado—after 1573 all Spanish expeditions were required to keep journals;—from the scientists accompanying trappers up the Missouri and down the Columbia; the diarists of the wagon trails; the geologists; the topographers; the reporters, like Villard and Richardson who described the Pike's Peak gold rush. True, many a Parson Weems crept into the picture, but on the whole the reporting was well done and the perspectives are very deep: reporters were on the scene long before Shakespeare dipped his pen.

The dominance of the conscious literary artist characterized the last half of the nineteenth century. No sooner was the first goosequill filled with Cherry Creek gold than the artists-with-a-purpose began their spiritual exploitation. But these conscious artists, enthralled by the demands of landscape for the pure and picturesque—seeking a Western type, so to speak—rejected what was complex. Meanwhile the reporter, when he was not too busy drinking or preaching, was making a naive record of these complexities.

Take, for example, the ethnic, moral, and psychic complexities in one episode of the Meeker massacre in 1879. Here we had a full-blooded Ute chief with a British name getting drunk on Kentucky whisky and singing a Negro spiritual to a captive American girl, then asking her, like Sigmund Spaeth, if she knew what it meant, while her murdered father lay over the hill with a log chain around his neck and a barrel stave down his throat. A sound novelist, like H. L. Davis, author of "Honey in the Horn," would be interested, I believe, in developing the influences bearing on such a situation, but to the rank and file these confusing compressions of experience are outside the code. These compressions are taboo unless idealized. My father, who is considerably older than the city of Denver, spent a recent week trying to figure out how his office boy was affected by social security legislation. This was immoral: he should spend his time lamenting the passing of the bison.

It is in the summarization of reporting that the region now is becoming articulate. I refer to such books as "Here They Dug the Gold," by George Willison, whose fine work on Leadville and the Tabors was followed by a number of others; the material, if not the treatment, of "The Forty-niners" by Archer Butler Hulbert; and "Timberline," Gene Fowler's colorful but incomplete story of Bonfils and Tammen. Haniel Long's new volume, "Interlinear to Cabeza de Vaca," is a byproduct of reporting. The *Colorado Magazine*, edited by Leroy R. Hafen of the State Historical Society, is doing a competent job of revealing the past through the reporting method. The field, however, is large and I shall not attempt to give an inventory.

There has lately been an inordinate regional consciousness, tremendous eagerness to do something about the various art forms. Equipment is not lacking: The Fine Arts Center in Colorado Springs with Boardman Robinson; The Central City Play Festival directed largely by Anne Evans and Robert Edmond Jones; The Writers' Conference in The Rocky Mountains, well organized by Edward Davison, the poet. These activities have at least focused attention on our spiritual confusion by engendering marvelous cat-and-dog fights. The row over the $100,000 Speer Memorial has made every Denver ward-heeler a critic, and it is a dull barber who cannot regale you with focal points and plastic organization. Yet all this rationalization usually winds up in esthetics rather than art. None of our literary work compares in quality with what Burnham Hoyt is doing in architecture, and I prefer the workaday output of such newspaper craftsmen as Lee Taylor Casey and Larry Martin to that of the interpretive artists. Indeed few of the upland bards have as vivid a sense of poetry as appears naively in the cadenced captions, dynamic and concrete, which Martin turns out daily for *The Denver Post*.

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R. L. S. with King Kalakaua of Hawaii

Stevenson once wrote Barrie: "Isobel Field is believed on the beach to be my illegitimate daughter by a native woman . . . my prices are coming down since I began to employ her as my amanuensis . . . has a growing conviction she is the author of my works. An unaffected pagan."

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The life story of Robert Louis Stevenson's step-daughter. Though much of it is concerned with her illustrious step-father, it is the revelation of her own vigorous, delightful personality that holds the reader throughout. Against the background of San Francisco, Paris, Hawaii, Samoa, she recreates in rich color the scenes of her eventful life. The book includes a number of hitherto unpublished poems by R. L. S. and is illustrated with photographs never before made public. $3.00

LIFE of JESUS

by FRANÇOIS MAURIAC

A provocative life of Christ for modern readers. ***The critic of the New York Times Book Review writes:*** "Mauriac's insistence on the human elements and on the integrated character of the Saviour gives us an impressive portrait. He will have nothing of 'the pale and insipid rabbi.' The Jesus of Mauriac must be a gladiator, a fighter, a man who is implacable in the drive toward the fulfillment of his mission. A man, too, subject to discouragement, alarm, fretfulness, righteous anger and even fury. 'All efforts to minimize the human element in him violate my deepest instincts.' "

"He has painted with a strong and, for the most part, thunderous brush. His Jesus is bold, implacable, superior to the strictures of His contemporary society, and beyond the need of justifying His actions. You are a rare being if you are not moved and thrilled by the brilliant artistry of a portrait of Jesus that is at once a sermon and a poem."—***The Brooklyn Citizen.***

"Mauriac is one who, as a novelist, has come to grips with many modern hearts stricken with mortal sickness. In this book he sets forth the remedy for that disease. It is a beautiful, gripping, very much alive book."
—***George N. Shuster, N. Y. Herald Tribune.***

LIFE OF JESUS has sold more than 100,000 copies in France. The volume is illustrated with 32 woodcuts by George Buday, of the Royal Hungarian Academy. Translated by Julie Kernan. $2.50

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The New Books

Fiction

THE STONE FIELD. By Martha Ostenso. Dodd, Mead. 1937. $2.50.

"Take it or leave it! Old Ashbrooke Hilyard had his feet on the ground. This country wouldn't be worth a damn today if it hadn't been built by men like him. . . . Now they're all dead—or most of them. And their grandsons are drinking sweet cocktails and lying in bed till noon. And we wonder what's wrong with the world."

This quotation is the theme song of "The Stone Field." Ashbrooke Hilyard had moved north from Nebraska, where there were not enough trees for him, and founded a great estate. He hung on to his land and his timber. This book has to do with Ashbrooke's grandchildren, and the disintegration of the family, fortune, the family morals, and the eventual despoiling of the land.

It is not Martha Ostenso's fault that this theme has become somewhat familiar. She understands the country and loves it. She writes of it extremely well (a little too well, sometimes, with too heavy a reliance on adjectives), and when the forests are cut down the trees certainly come crashing down. Yet somehow the situation does not seem as tragic as it undoubtedly is, as the author undoubtedly feels it to be. The farther people get from the land, the softer and spongier they become, she implies (though it would be unfair to suggest she sees virtue only in ploughing and churning), and the third generation of Hilyards is plenty spongy. This makes their various misfortunes (notably young Ashbrooke's) seem too cataclysmic. And, since the reader understands from the beginning that Jo Porte and Royce Hilyard, the best of the lot, are bound to fall in love, does it not seem a little contrived to keep them apart until page 309, when, presumably, they will clear the Stone Field and start over?

This is a good book, and a readable one. Furthermore, it is honest, sincere, and well written. It is hard to say why it isn't better.

C. H. M.

AS OF THE GODS. By Rollo Walter Brown. Appleton-Century. 1937. $2.

The theme of this story is a big one, the old metaphysical problem of man's place in his universe, of his inkling of life after death, and his fear of death after life. How is a man to live, once these thoughts have come to him and taken root? Mr. Brown presents such a man, rich, successful, and esteemed, happy and loved, who stumbles upon these intimations of mortality and can have no peace until he has struck a new course that will take them in and still allow him a life of assurance. Any book that deals seriously with this theme, as does Mr. Brown's novel, is readable, if only for the challenge it holds and the questions it asks. It must be added that Mr. Brown gets no further than putting his questions clearly and outlining the situation it creates. Beyond that he seems unable to go, and ends by avoiding the issue just when it has become compelling, and even hinting that his character has found the solution somewhere in communion with the satisfactions of work and love. The book seems to peter out, for lack of staying power. This is not so bad as it sounds, since only a great novelist could see its problem through.

N. L. R.

ANNA BECKER. By Max White. Stackpole. 1937. $2.50.

Comes Mr. White, who deposes and says that one Anna Becker, of German descent, kept a tea-shop in the small college town of Oldboro, New Hampshire; that she was a respected and popular graduate of the college; that a Swedish quarryman named Larsen entered her shop one evening and raped her. Anna did not tell anyone, partly for the obvious reason that the small college town of Oldboro would not like her any better for making her misfortune known, partly for less obvious reasons which appear to reside in Anna's character and Mr. White's philosophy. Her attempts at escape or resistance were few and uninven-

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tive. And so Larsen kept coming "every night."

So it went on, until Anna was exposed. But all the while Anna was changing. It seems that as a respected and popular young woman, she was really a very reprehensible character. She had false notions and scruples; and she possessed an amatory nature of which she was unaware. Her coldness was overcome by Larsen. When he is finally imprisoned on a false conviction for manslaughter, she writes him a letter in which she tells him that she is "grateful," that she has at last become "as abundant and alive" as Larsen himself.

It is possible that a great book could be written on the transformation of a woman's character from false to real by a process beginning with an unsought physical outrage. Mr. White has not written it. In fact he has committed something of a rape himself on style, common sense, and credulity. But perhaps it can be said that he is not without power, even that he is not without an instinct, as yet rudimentary, for the technical means requisite to his intended impression. He has a knack for animal psychology which he uses with a certain crude effectiveness to render intuitive behavior; but he seems insufficiently endowed with another power, indispensable to such a book as this, the power of *human* psychology, with its shadings and complexities and little increments of plausibility stealing over and gradually encompassing what we like to think is the monstrous character of crime.

T. M.

Miscellaneous

PICTURING MIRACLES OF PLANT AND ANIMAL LIFE. By Arthur C. Pillsbury. Lippincott. 1937. $3.

The author of this book, inventor of innumerable technical devices for panoramic and microscopic photography, sprang into prominence in the San Francisco quake by being so far a photographer and so little a scared man that he fiddled with his shutter while Rome burned—and gave the world a record, in silver nitrate, of the fire and the turmoil. His book, describing his methods in the highly technical aspects of biological photography, is not for the beginner, certainly. We do not know what professional photographers would have to say of all his downright and absolutist statements (they are notoriously fault-finding with one another's work). For a botanist it is stimulating to know that the elusive and cryptic manifestations of growth, eclosion, conjugation, and pollenation (persistently called "pollenization" by the author, a word we cannot find in our unabridged dictionary) are now captured by the complex processes of microscopic motion photography, lapse-time exposures, and other difficult angle-shots into the mysteries of life. There is a chapter upon color photography which admits its present imperfections. There is even a digression into chemical farming which has little to do with photography but attests the author's enthusiasm for experiment and his whole approach toward nature, which is that of the trained mechanical engineer.

D. C. P.

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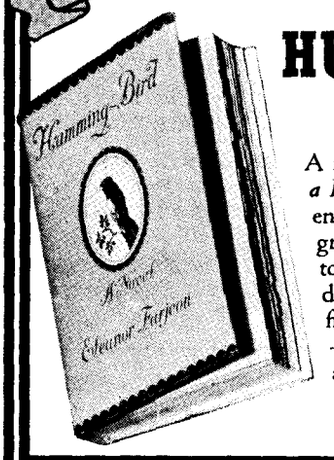

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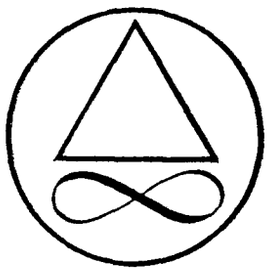

"Number rules the universe."
—PYTHAGORAS

Last week *The Inner Sanctum* published *Men of Mathematics, The Lives and Achievements of the Great Mathematicians from Zeno to Poincaré,* by DR. ERIC T. BELL.

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The author, DR. ERIC T. BELL, is Professor of Mathematics at The California Institute of Technology. He is a former President of The Mathematical Association of America and a former Vice-President of The American Association for the Advancement of Science.

—ESSANDESS

Coming April 3rd

THE SPRING ANNOUNCEMENT NUMBER

of

The Saturday Review

The Clearing House

CONDUCTED BY AMY LOVEMAN

Inquiries, accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope, should be directed to Miss Loveman, in care of The Saturday Review.

A BALANCED RATION FOR A WEEK'S READING

BLACK TENTS OF ARABIA. By Carl R. Raswan. *Little, Brown.*

NIGHT OVER FITCH'S POND. By Cora Jarrett. *Houghton Mifflin.*

SCENES FROM THE MESOZOIC. By Clarence Day. *Yale University Press.*

Novels of Plymouth and Williamsburg

G. C. B. of Hanover, N. H., *who not long ago made a trip to Williamsburg, Va., Plymouth, and Cape Cod wants to know of novels and general works dealing with the two former and also the titles of a few books on the last.*

FICTION with Plymouth and Williamsburg for background is surprisingly scant considering how famous in colonial annals those towns are. Jane Austin (not the great Jane, but her namesake whose last name is spelt with an *i* instead of an *e*) has a group of books on Plymouth to her credit, A NAMELESS NOBLEMAN (Houghton Mifflin), which wears a mildly religious air, DR. LE BARON AND HIS DAUGHTERS, whose hero is the son of the NAMELESS NOBLEMAN, and BETTY ALDEN, THE FIRST-BORN DAUGHTER OF THE PILGRIMS, a sequel to Dr. Le Baron. Everything else in the way of fiction that I find listed seems to be out of print. As to non-fiction G. C. B. will find W. R. Bliss's OLD COLONY TOWN (Houghton Mifflin) and A. Lord's PLYMOUTH AND THE PILGRIMS (Houghton Mifflin) informative volumes. For Williamsburg the novel that has probably had the widest publicity is the once extremely popular AUDREY (Houghton Mifflin), by Mary Johnston, which laid its story there and in Jamestown. John Fox's ERSKINE DALE, PIONEER (Scribners), though it is mainly concerned with adventures among the Indians, presents some scenes in Williamsburg between 1774 and 1784. On the historic and picturesque aspects of the town, which the recent reconstruction has done so much to emphasize, are two volumes, WILLIAMSBURG SCRAP BOOK (Dietz) and WILLIAMSBURG IN COLONIAL TIMES (Dietz), by J. O. Osborne. As to MISS GIPPY GAULT, concerning which G. C. B. inquires, I can find nothing in the catalogues listing books in print. So far as they (the catalogues) go, the book is "spurlos versenkt."

G. C. B. asks also for the titles of a few volumes on Cape Cod. She might find Agnes Rothery's CAPE COD, OLD AND NEW (Houghton Mifflin) and H. C. Kittredge's CAPE COD (Houghton Mifflin) satisfactory on the descriptive side. In stories there are, of course, J. C. Lincoln's CAPE COD STORIES (Appleton-Century) to which she might add his CAPE COD BALLADS (Appleton-Century).

Addenda

Apropos of the inquiry of K. W. in regard to private presses printed in the issue of December 26, Carroll D. Coleman writes *"The Book* on private presses is Will Ransom's PRIVATE PRESSES AND THEIR BOOKS (Bowker), and Will Ransom himself says Tomkinson's SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY (London: First Edition Club) is valuable but now out of print. Adding to the list of novels which would serve as points of departure for sermons, which I printed not long ago in response to the request of W. H. B., Lucy Austin Ball suggests Henry Handel Richardson's ULTIMA THULE (Norton) and LOVE IS ENOUGH (Knopf), by Francis Brett Young.

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Letters to the Editor

(*Continued from page 9*)

quate or false is to say merely that the reader's prejudices and experiences are unlike those of the historian. To say that they are profound and true merely means that reader and author agree.

Frederick J. Turner, who must stand high in Mr. DeVoto's estimation as a competent scholar, was an historian in this sense. He sought a unity and rhythm in American history; indeed, his whole work was colored by his romantic interpretation of the American past. Professor Schlesinger himself, in his notable monograph on the colonial merchants in the preliminaries of the American Revolution, sought to find unifying reasons for the projection of this class into the Revolution. George Louis Beer, a careful historical scholar, laid down the general thesis for the outbreak of the Revolution that today is the accepted interpretation in every American textbook. Charles Beard, Charles M. Andrews, and V. L. Parrington, all outstanding professional scholars in Mr. DeVoto's sense, have sought complete answers to the problems they have taken within their purview.

Mr. DeVoto is too contemptuous of the achievements of the amateur historians. "The Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences," a highly discriminating work, includes the biographies of thirty-eight dead American historians. Of these, twenty-one were amateurs in the sense that Mr. DeVoto presumably employs the term. They were not professionally trained historians who made a calling of historical research largely in conjunction with a career of academic teaching. In this company are to found Charles F. Adams, George Bancroft, G. L. Beer, A. J. Beveridge, John Fiske, A. J. Mahan, J. L. Motley, Francis Parkman, J. F. Rhodes, W. R. Thayer, and A. D. White. Perhaps the word "amateur" means to Mr. DeVoto "an unqualified person," but this is neither the ordinary meaning of the word nor a useful critical conception. not to come from other callings. Mr. Woodward is an amateur, but he is also a mature man who has lived fully and excitingly in the world, who has read widely, and thought deeply. His history of the United States is for men and women of his own generation, who have shared something of his experiences. "A New American History" merits the attention of the American reading public.

LOUIS M. HACKER.
Columbia University,
New York City.

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—JOHN COURNOS *in New York Times Book Review.*

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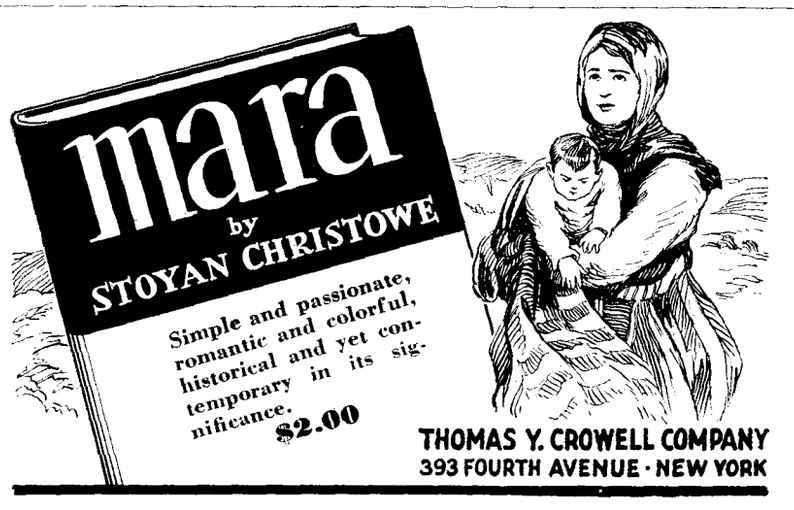
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LAST TRUMP *Lee Thayer* (Dodd, Mead: $2.)	Death predicted by ace of spades occurs on trans-Atlantic liner and Peter Clancy, incognito, takes 24 hours to get slayer.	Fake sweepstakes tickets, blackmail, a friendly chimpanzee, and a killer intent on rubbing out rivals, provide plenteous excitement.	Satisfactory
THE PONSON CASE *Freeman Wills Crofts* (Dodd, Mead: $2.)	Inspector Tanner follows triple trail in violent death of British knight and reaches amazing conclusion. (First published 1927.)	For those unfamiliar with, or recently introduced to Crofts's meticulous methods—and for addicts with reasonably short memories.	Supersleuthing
NINE DOCTORS AND A MADMAN *Elizabeth Curtiss* (Simon & Schuster: $2.)	Violent death of doctor in New England mental hospital cleared up by plump Dr. N. Bunce in agreeably unethical fashion.	Spooky locale, engaging characters, illuminating psychiatric and pathological passages, somewhat *dégagé* sleuthing, and a very illegal ending.	Good
SPY MEETS SPY *Frederick Frost* (Macrae-Smith: $2.)	Anthony Hamilton, ace secret agent, again foils insidious Franco-Jap de Graulchier thereby saving U. S., Asia, Africa, Polynesia, and points West.	Glittering tissue of impossibilities with hell popping all over Continental Europe, including some dazzling scenes in a Russian prison camp.	Thriller

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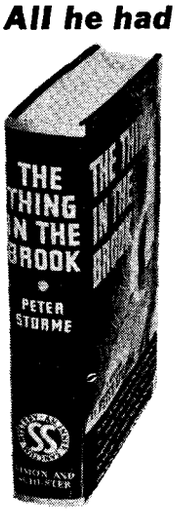

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Trade Winds

BY P. E. G. QUERCUS

A RESOUNDING victory for the booksellers in their long fight against price-cutting was registered on March 9, when the New York Court of Appeals upheld the Fair Trade Practice (Feld-Crawford) Act, previously declared unconstitutional. The court reversed its earlier ruling on the basis of a recent U. S. Supreme Court decision which sustained similar legislation in California and Illinois.

☞This is the third time in three years that the booksellers have won price-maintenance. The first two times (NRA, and first decision on the Feld-Crawford Act) court rulings snatched away the victory. This time it seems to be final, and the *SRL* congratulates the trade on a long and successful fight. ☞The Feld-Crawford Act makes it possible for price-maintenance contracts on books to be entered into between publishers and booksellers; and once such a contract has been signed, it renders price-cutting actionable, even price-cutting on the part of a retailer who has *not* signed a contract.

☞Numerous technical and legal questions must be ironed out before any new contracts are signed. Meanwhile the American Booksellers' Association is preparing a standard form of contract for submission to the trade, and the National Association of Book Publishers has called a meeting for March 18 to discuss the necessary legal points. The Macmillan Co., which already has price-maintenance contracts on "Gone with the Wind" in California and Illinois, is offering contracts on this book in New York. In a quick, incomplete survey just before going to press, we learn that Doubleday Doran, Farrar & Rinehart, Reynal & Hitchcock, and W. W. Norton & Co. have definitely stated their intention to offer Feld-Crawford contracts; other publishers will do so after the Thursday meeting.

☞On March 11 R. H. Macy & Co., principal price-cutters on books in New York, ran an ad headed "The Consumer Will Now Decide," and stating that "This law opens the door to price-fixing by manufacturers—and price-fixing means price-*raising*." ☞The *SRL* does not believe that the Feld-Crawford Act will result in higher list prices on books. The intention of the publishers and booksellers signing contracts is to prevent books from being used as "loss leaders." The independent bookseller has been squeezed hard by the loss leader competition. The *SRL* believes that the independent bookseller is a valuable social asset, and we regard the Fair Trade Act as a signal advantage not only to the trade, but to readers and book-lovers everywhere.

☞Coincidence, goddess of goof, was hard on Poor Old Quercus's trail last week. About two hours after he had been hunting a copy of the *SRL* in the Fred Harvey bookstore, Union Station, Cleveland, the first consignment of 25 copies arrived there for sale. ☞Mr. Clip Boutell, energetic promotioneer of our own Bookstore Department, had just signed up Cleveland (and three other Fred Harvey branches, viz. Chicago, Kansas City, St. Louis) for 25 copies each, weekly.

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Boswell Detrunked

A CATALOGUE OF PAPERS RELATING TO BOSWELL, JOHNSON AND SIR WILLIAM FORBES FOUND AT FETTERCAIRN HOUSE. By Claude Colleer Abbott. Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1936. 500 copies. $7.

IF Tom Sawyer on attaining maturity developed an itch for scholarly investigation (and his early career certainly adumbrated such a tendency), the same incredible good fortune must have overtaken him that befell Professor Abbott. In search of material relating to James Beattie, Professor Abbott was carried by logical stages to the door (and ultimately to the attic) of Fettercairn House. Here, after several weeks of poking about in hidden corners, he unearthed at the last such a trove of documents as collectors dream about, the bulk of it concerned with a greater James than Beattie.

At the end of an all too short introduction which is a buried treasure story gone Ph.D., Professor Abbott summarizes the details of his find. There were hundreds of letters to Boswell, many having to do with the "Life," and most of them accompanied by drafts of Boswell's replies; several Boswell journals and registers of letters; letters of Burke, Mrs. Thrale, Edward Dilly, Wilkes, and others of the Johnson circle, and 119 letters of Johnson to various correspondents.

Professor Abbott has sorted his material into more than 1600 lots, in most instances summarizing the contents of a document in one or two sentences, and occasionally at greater length. The effect makes for a higher degree of readability than one might suppose; thus, the skeletonizing of Johnson's twenty letters to Dr. Richard Brocklesby, who attended him in his final illness, provides a pathetic and absorbing sequence. Of this important group of twenty, one is used entire in the "Life," sixteen are printed there in part, and three are unpublished.

The Fettercairn papers are obviously a Boswellian discovery that has been exceeded in importance only by the contents of the ebony cabinet of Malahide Castle. "Is it too much to hope," asks Professor Abbott, "that the ghost of Boswell begins to be content?"

Happy days are inferentially here again. Scribners have just issued a cloth-bound quarto catalogue listing fifty lots whose aggregate price is $63,640. It seems a modest anticlimax to add that every lot is accompanied by an illustration. The blue-ribbon item is the original manuscript, in full orchestral score, of Mozart's Haffner Symphony, offered at $20,000 (including, presumably, two aisle seats). For $12,500 is available a copy of Browning's "Pauline" (London, 1833) in superb state, and a presentation copy to boot. The recipient was Comte Amédée de Ripert Monclar, to whom, two years later, Browning dedicated "Paracelsus." When Yale acquired its copy of "Pauline" some years since, Professor William Lyon Phelps organized a parade with band and transported the book through the streets of New Haven on a silk cushion flanked by a guard of honor. On this basis the Scribner copy should rate an elephant with howdah and six squadrons of cavalry.

Eight years ago Edward S. Harkness gave the Library of Congress two remarkable collections of manuscripts concerning Peru during the critical period of 1531-1651. In 1932 a calendar of these documents was prepared by Stella R. Clemence under the direction of J. F. Jameson, Chief of the Division of Manuscripts, and issued from the Government Printing Office. Now, under the same auspices, appears a second volume in the Harkness series, comprising a full text (transcription and translation) of documents relating directly to the brothers Pizarro and the Almagros, father and son. The chronicle thus unfolded in all its legalistic ponderosity and diffuse Castillian formality presents an odd parallel to the Spain of today. In general the paperwork of the period stood a better chance of immediate survival than did the men whom it concerned. Of four Pizarros (father and three sons) and a half-brother, three were executed or assassinated and one died in battle; of two Almagros both were executed. The sole survivor of this gory septet, Hernando Pizarro, perversely lived to be a hundred.

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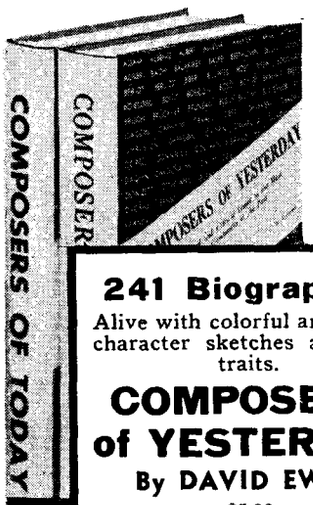

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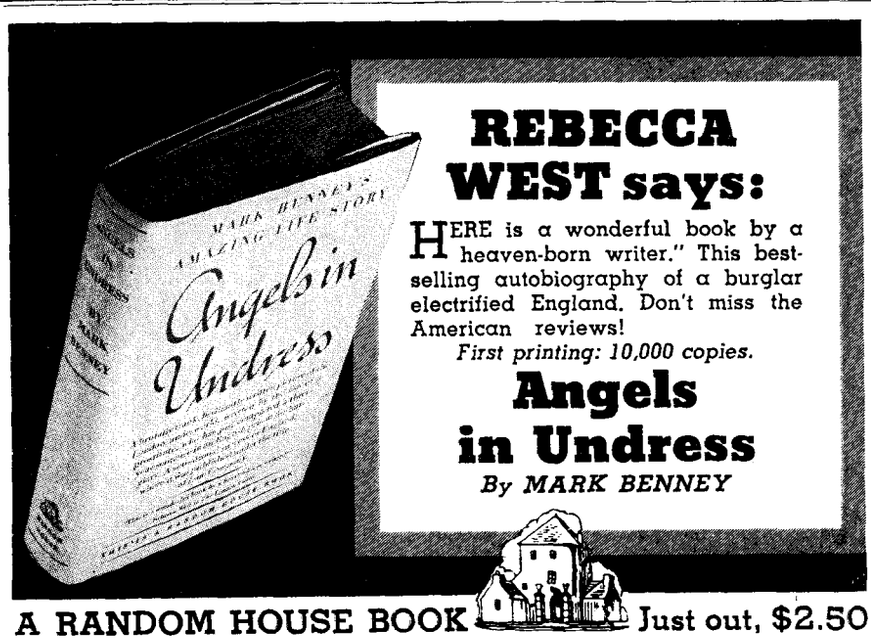

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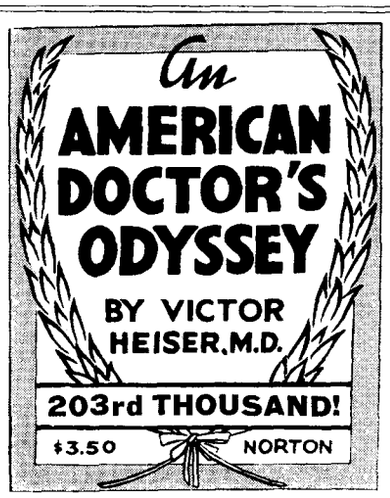

Double-Crostics: No. 156

By ELIZABETH S. KINGSLEY

1-X	2-U	3-Q	4-W		5-E	6-J	7-V		8-O		9-A	10-G	11-S	12-M	13-L	14-N
15-R	16-X		17-Q	18-E	19-H	20-N	21-D	22-S	23-B		24-Y	25-P	26-V		27-L	28-F
29-G	30-H	31-R	32-K		33-C	34-O		35-F	36-C	37-T		38-G	39-I	40-Q	41-L	42-J
	43-A	44-L	45-C	46-T	47-J	48-W	49-Q		50-P	51-D		52-K	53-T	54-R	55-V	56-A
57-O	58-L		59-Q	60-B	61-E		62-A	63-K	64-O	65-Q	66-F	67-D	68-P		69-B	70-K
71-G	72-I		73-X	74-D	75-R	76-S	77-Q	78-Y		79-O	80-S	81-L	82-U	83-B		84-W
85-C	86-J	87-T		88-E		89-S	90-L	91-V	92-P	93-O	94-C		95-R	96-F	97-H	98-D
	99-B	100-P		101-H	102-E	103-C		104-R	105-S	106-X	107-D	108-N	109-H	110-B		111-H
112-R	113-T		114-L	115-D	116-Y	117-I	118-A		119-P	120-I	121-E	122-D	123-F		124-E	125-K
126-V		127-D	128-Q	129-L	130-M		131-U	132-A	133-C	134-K		135-V	136-P		137-F	138-H
139-N	140-I	141-C	142-Q	143-F	144-W		145-P	146-C		147-S	148-T	149-V	150-P	151-W		152-A
153-E	154-G	155-Y	156-N	157-U		158-T	159-P		160-F	161-G	162-B	163-E	164-H		165-W	166-Y
	167-O		168-S	169-M	170-P	171-C	172-N	173-E		174-S	175-W	176-D	177-U	178-U	179-L	

DIRECTIONS

To solve this puzzle, you must guess twenty-five words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered. These numbers appear under the dashes in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter in the required word. The key letters in the squares are for convenience, indicating to which word in the definitions each letter in the diagram belongs. When you have guessed a word, fill it in on the dashes; then write each letter in the correspondingly numbered square on the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Reading up and down the letters mean nothing. The black squares indicate ends of words; therefore words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.

When the column headed WORDS is filled in, the initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Authority for spelling and definitions is Webster's International Dictionary.

The Solution of last week's *Double-Crostic* will be found on page 19 of this issue.

DEFINITIONS	WORDS
A. Character in "Merchant of Venice."	9 132 118 62 56 43 152
B. Son of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra.	162 23 69 83 99 60 110
C. Fountain struck by Pegasus' hoof (Gr. Myth.).	36 85 45 171 33 141 133 94 146 103
D. Inclined to novelties.	176 98 74 51 115 21 122 127 67 107
E. Name of two German composer-brothers (1850-1924) (1847-1918)	163 153 102 88 121 5 173 61 18 124
F. Snickered.	35 96 143 160 123 28 66 137
G. Disjunctive correlative	10 29 154 161 71 38
H. Inalienable	19 30 111 164 109 138 97 101
I. Nymph of mountains, lakes, etc.	72 39 140 120 117
J. English town with many literary associations.	47 6 86 42
K. A salad vegetable.	134 125 52 63 70 32
L. A fine specimen of writing.	41 44 13 81 90 58 179 129 27 114
M. Cognizance.	12 169 130
N. American dramatist (1888-).	156 20 108 14 172 139
O. English sculptor (1755-1826).	34 93 8 64 79 167 57
P. Where Byron died.	170 145 159 136 50 119 100 68 92 25 150
Q. Without a will.	3 40 59 128 17 65 142 77 49
R. Famous artist and autobiographer (1500-1571).	31 75 104 95 112 15 54
S. Committed with confidence to another.	22 76 147 11 80 89 168 105 174
T. Sacred piece of wood beside Canaanite altars (Bib.).	158 113 148 37 53 46 87
U. Stair post.	157 178 131 82 2
V. Forestalls; outstrips.	126 26 55 135 91 177 149 7
W. Author of "Edward II."	4 175 151 48 165 84 144
X. Consumes.	16 106 73 1
Y. Attractively stylish (slang).	116 155 166 24 78

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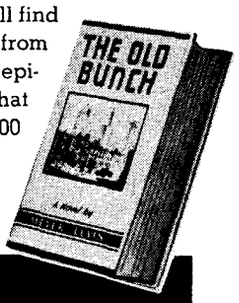

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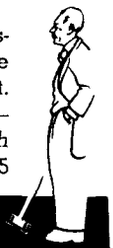

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